

*fa Evangelical Religion.*

themselves more intimately into our minds when thus coming warm in the course of passion and action, and speaking to us with the emphasis imparted by affecting and dreadful events ; but still are of less vivid and penetrating charm, than as emanating from the insulated magnificence of such striking and sublime individual characters as those of epic poetry. The mind of the reader does not, from those dramatic scenes, retain for months and years an animated recollection of some personage whose name constantly recalls the sentiments which he uttered, or with which his conduct inspired us. The Greek drama is extremely deficient in both grand and interesting characters, in any sense of the epithets that should imply an imposing or a captivating moral power. Much the greatest number of the persons and personages brought on the scene are such as we care nothing about, otherwise than merely on account of the circumstances in which we see them acting or suffering. With few exceptions they come on the stage, and go off, without possessing us with either admiration or affection. When therefore the maxims or reflections which we hear from them have an impressive effect, it is less from any commanding quality in the persons, than from the striking, and sometimes portentous and fearful situations, that the sentiments have their pathos. There are a few characters of greater power over our respect and our sympathies, who draw us, by virtue of personal qualities, into a willing communion with them, at times, in moral principles and emotions. We are relieved and gratified, after passing through so much wickedness, misfortune, and inane common-place moralizing, to be greeted with fine expressions of justice, generosity, and fidelity to a worthy purpose, by persons whom we can regard as living realizations of such virtues. It is like finding among barbarous nations (as sometimes happens), some individual or two eminently and unaccountably above the level of their

tribe, whose intelligence and virtues have, by the contrast and the surprise, a stronger attraction than similar qualities meeting us in a cultivated community. But the delight sometimes kindled by sentiments of magnanimous or gentle virtue, is exceedingly repressed, and often quenched, in the reader of the Greek drama, by the incessant intrusion of a hideous moral barbarism ; especially by the implication of the morality